

and of course its corollary, not having enough authority vested in subordinates, are all indicated in the failures at Pearl Harbor. The reader will even find a hint of the dangers associated with political correctness in

the intelligence community at not spying on the Japanese because we were not yet at war and did not want to offend them. The book, a fascinating foray into the workings of the War Department in 1941 and the

Army Pearl Harbor Investigation Board, gives an interesting picture of how and why the United States was caught so completely by surprise.

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MR Letters

Integrating Women into the Combat Force

Hillel Adler, *Graduate Student, Security Studies Program, Tel Aviv University, Israel*—I read with great interest the articles in the November-December 2002 issue of *Military Review* about integrating women into combat units. I believe all three articles contain some misconceptions and misinformation regarding the integration of women into the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

The authors of the articles articulate contradicting views as to the feasibility of integrating females into the IDF. On page 55, Major M. Nicholas Coppola, Major Kevin G. LaFrance, and Henry J. Corretta state that the IDF "began allowing females in its infantry and tank units in July 2001." They even say this was done "without studying the potential impact on longer-lasting unit cohesion." On page 63, J. Michael Brower claims that the IDF has opened "all positions to women based on their individual willingness and ability to perform." On page 72, Captain Adam N. Wojack contradicts the previous authors by stating that "Israeli women have not served in combat roles since Israel's War of Independence in 1948. . . . Today . . . [t]hey are restricted to clerical and non-combat medical fields."

The truth is, as usual, somewhere in the middle. In the last few years, especially since the Israeli Supreme Court's verdict regarding the case of a woman attempting to enter Air Force flight school in 1995, Israeli women have enjoyed unparalleled access to military jobs previously excluded to them. They can serve in border police units; on Navy ships and as fighter pilots; in various combat support functions, including technical and logistic functions; and

in combat fronts such as the West Bank and the Gaza strip.¹ In fact, in 2002 it was reported that 60 percent of all female recruits would serve in military positions previously excluded to them.²

Integration into ground combat units has taken a slightly different path. Women in the IDF have begun to be incorporated in small numbers into field artillery batteries and anti-aircraft units. Feedback from these experiences is partial and still categorized as being in the test phase.³ The greatest inclusion of women in ground combat units has occurred in an experimental mixed-gender combat unit pulling guard and surveillance duties on the country's southern and eastern borders. By all accounts, the unit has been operating successfully, but it is still categorized as an experimental unit.⁴

The armored corps conducted an internal review in 2001 which concluded that women were unable to physically keep up with men.⁵ In addition, because of concerns by orthodox soldiers as to the adverse effects female inclusion would have on ground combat units, a committee was set up in 2002 which recommended that women not serve in infantry and armored corps and placed various restrictions on the segregation of the sexes in the field.⁶

The increased integration of women into the IDF has not been without its share of difficulties. Various adverse effects range from an increase in reports of sexual harassment; injuries caused by a lack of adequate physical fitness; a drop in motivation by women to sign on after their mandatory service; and a lack of interest in volunteering for combat units.⁷

Female service in the IDF has long attracted attention because of its

gender-neutral mandatory draft policy (excluding some orthodox women who choose national service on religious grounds). Still, integrating women into the IDF is not as far along as some think and not as prohibited as others contend.

1. Margot Dukovitch, "Women on the front line," *Jerusalem Post*, 10 August 2001, 1B; Anech O'Sullivan, "IDF deploys female combatants in territories," *Jerusalem Post*, 17 January 2001, 2; Maia Rodberg, "She's in the Navy now," *Jerusalem Post*, 8 June 2001, 5B.
2. Eitan Rubin, "The boys will make coffee, the girls will take care of the tanks," *Maariv*, 13 October 2002.
3. Felix Frish, "The Artillery core is formulating a recommendation for the mandatory draft of women," *Yedioth-Aharonot*, 18 March 2002; Frish, "Soon: female combatants in specialized Artillery units," *Yedioth-Aharonot*, 15 December 2002.
4. Amos Harol, "Mixed sex infantry units to be expanded," *Ha-aretz*, English ed., 13 October 2002.
5. Anech O'Sullivan, "IDF dropping idea of women in tanks," *Jerusalem Post*, 14 May 2001, 5.
6. Amir Rapoport, "Female soldiers would not serve as infantry warfighters," *Yedioth-Aharonot*, 18 June 2002; Eetta Prince-Gibson, "A problem with women," *Jerusalem Post*, 16 July 2001, 2; "Gender skirmishes in the IDF," *Jerusalem Post*, 6 August 2001, 6.
7. Eilat Asher, "Every five days a new case of sexual harassment is reported to Military Police," *Maariv*, 24 January 2003; Asher, "Combat service distorts the menstrual cycle," *Maariv*, 2 February 2003; Judy Siegel-Itzkovich, "IDF women add weight to the army," *Jerusalem Post*, 9 June 2002, 9; Amnon Brazilai, "Female interest in pilots course is losing altitude," *Ha-aretz*, English ed., 3 May 2002; Rapoport, "IDF research: Female officers today are of less quality," *Yedioth-Aharonot*, 30 May 2002; Shoshana London Sapiro, "Women soldiers under strain and under appreciated," *Jerusalem Post*, 9 October 2002, 4.

Women and Tailhook

LTC Robert P. Kingsbury, *USAR, Retired, Laconia, New Hampshire*—The Tailhook incident proved that women cannot handle combat.* Those women Navy officers reportedly could not rebuff a handful of drunken Navy flyboys. If those women could not simply point a finger at those men and say, "Look, Buster, you're not going to get away with that," and if necessary back that statement up with an elbow through the men's front teeth, then there is no chance that women (in general) can handle combat. Unlike what most writers say, combat is not about being shot at. Combat is carrying the close fight to the enemy and winning it. Not only can women not do that, very few men can do that.

Korean war draft figures show that

**Tailhook was a meeting of Navy aviators in 1991. Some of the men reportedly made indecent advances to women Navy officers staying at the same hotel. Ultimately, the careers of 14 admirals and almost 300 Navy aviators were scuttled or damaged by Tailhook. For more information, see on-line at www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/navy/tailhook/.*

COL Cecil B. Currey, *USAR, Retired, Lutz, Florida*—Drop my name from your list of subscribers. The material between pages 54-74 [*Military Review*, November-December 2002] was just too much for me to take. My favorite magazine has gone politically correct. Women have no place in the fighting forces. They are too weak, unable (and unwilling) to pull their own weight, need special protections and separate facilities, and generally hamstring the ability of men to carry on a firefight. Don't believe me? Then, read [Robert J. Bunker's article, "Martin van Creveld on *Men, Women & War*, on pages 102-104 in the same issue].

Editor's note: Recent events show that some young women are just as capable as some young men in protecting them-

These soldiers are only a few of the women participating in Operation Conquest Iraqi Freedom. "Thumper," a female fighter pilot recently said, "This is a great and rewarding career. There are opportunities open to women that they just haven't had in the past. And, I would tell [women considering joining the military], if they have a dream, to go for it" [on-line at <www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/04/09/sprj.irq.thumper/index.html> . 10 April 2003.

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